

WHERE WORLDS MEET

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Rail Pastors

Rail Pastors are Christians who volunteer to bring spiritual and emotional support to rail passengers across the United Kingdom.

2

“Whatever you do to the least of these...”

A pastor couple in India intervenes to save a dying infant.



3



Unloved to Loved

Persevering in a new faith, Nargiza's strongest witness was to her own family.

5

Chaplains to train passengers

By Ted Voigt

Milliken Park is a train station outside of Glasgow, where trains frequently pass through at high speeds. Because of this, it's a place where some consider committing suicide. The station is too small to warrant staff, so the local police and Network Rail are working with local churches and organisations to support distressed passengers.

Cheryl and Roy Adair are members of the St Mathews Church of the Nazarene in Paisley, Scotland, and are volunteers with Rail Pastors.

"The word pastor involves caring," said Cheryl. "Our motto is: care, listen, help."

Rail Pastors, an extension of Street Pastors, are a group of Christians who volunteer to be like chaplains at train platforms and carriages across the United Kingdom. They pray, make conversation, and look for people who might be especially troubled, distressed or even considering suicide. They will occasionally start up conversations.

"If we really see someone who is vulnerable or distressed, we would go up and ask them how they were tonight. From our training, we know it's never a bad thing," Cheryl said.

Street Pastors and Rail Pastors go through over 50 hours of training to prepare for the range of conversations that may take place on their patrols. In addition to the standard Street Pastor training, Rail Pastors undergo additional training from Samaritans, a UK-based suicide prevention organisation.

Street Pastors and Rail Pastors are an initiative of a UK para-church organisation called Ascension Trust, whose mission is to mobilise the Church to make a positive social impact on the community. Through these initiatives, they utilise the passions and skills of lay leaders to bring the presence of Christ to people right where they need it.

"The work of Street Pastors has been very powerful and effective in our cities for many years, and now Rail Pastors ministry is another 'front line' ministry reaching out with the Gospel in places and at times when the church would not normally be engaging with others," said Jim Ritchie, superintendent of the British Isles North



District. "I am very proud of Cheryl and Roy Adair as they serve Jesus and represent the Church of the Nazarene in this way, and pray for them as they continue in this ministry."

"Being out on the streets at night, we're carrying Jesus Christ with us," Cheryl said. "I totally believe that. We are engaging with people who would never come in to a church, and we're not there to Bible bash, we're there to care, to listen, and to help. But the amazing thing is people ask why, and that gives us the opportunity to tell them why."

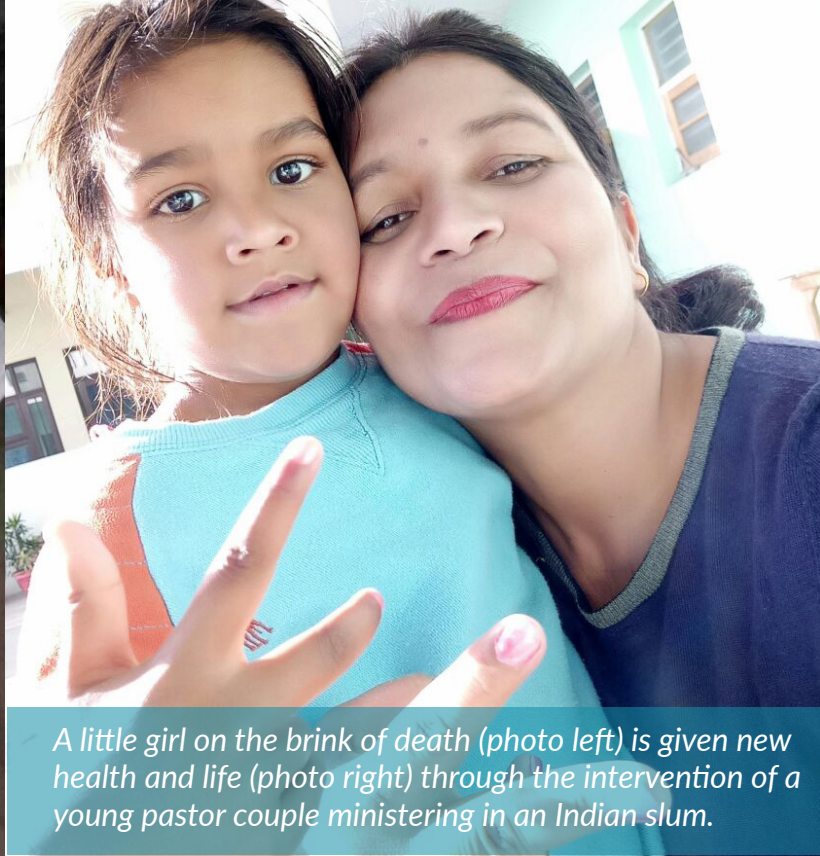
One of their primary ongoing prayers in train stations is simply for peace. Especially in stations where local youth can sometimes cause problems, praying for peace makes a difference, and it's noticeable to the railway staff. Rail Pastors have changed and saved lives, but it's not just the down-and-out in train stations who are affected.

"Amazingly," says Cheryl, "the police, the council, Network Rail, they've all seen the merit of what Christians can do in the street. We've had miraculous answers to prayer in the street."

If nothing else, they can at least offer to pray for people. Cheryl says, "No one has ever refused prayer."

And often, it's the beginning point of a longer conversation, one which is only possible when the church goes to the train station. □





A little girl on the brink of death (photo left) is given new health and life (photo right) through the intervention of a young pastor couple ministering in an Indian slum.

“Whatever you do to the least of these”

By Rev. Rajiv Yangad

While visiting the north Indian slums of Patiala, to minister to the impoverished garbage pickers who live there, one day Mrs. Sulochana Singh saw something that broke her heart: a small baby girl lying on a cot with thousands of bees swarming over her nearly lifeless, skeletal body.

That baby was malnourished to the point of death, infected by many oozing bedsores. Sulochana watched as the child struggled to breathe.

Sulochana had compassion on the child and wanted to do something for her. At the same time, she recognized that it wasn't her business, and worried about whether to interfere.

In that moment, Sulochana says, “I heard a soft voice inside me saying, ‘What would you have done if she was your own baby?’ That voice touched me and I told my husband about the voice and got his consent to help the child.”

Sulochana and her husband, Pastor Akash Singh, found the baby's parents and talked with them to find out why the baby had been left out on

the cot like this. They learned the child had been so ill that doctors had given up hope for her, telling the parents that she would die. So the parents, not knowing what else they could do, had left the baby on the cot to die and prepared a grave for her.

But Sulochana was persistent and asked if she and her husband could try to treat the baby in a government hospital. The father agreed. He went with Sulochana and Akash to take the baby to the children's ward of the government hospital. There they met with more disappointment. A doctor told them that because the baby was about to die, they couldn't admit her for any treatment.

Sulochana told the doctor that she and Akash run a charitable organization called Grace Seva Smittee (Grace Service Committee) and it was through that organization they had come on behalf of the child. They pled with him to admit her to the hospital.

The doctor's attitude changed. He decided to take a chance on the little girl. He called his team and started treatment. With some oxygen, she immediately began to improve.

Then, unexpectedly, the baby suddenly stopped breathing. The staff said she had probably died. Unwilling to give up, Sulochana and Akash went outside her room, knelt down and interceded to the Lord for the baby's life. Even before they finished their prayer with “Amen,” someone came out and told them the baby had begun breathing again.

see “INDIA” • page 4

INDIA: New hope, new life, new name

Continued from page 3

They rushed back into the room where doctors said they were going to run some tests and that they were optimistic for the baby's life.

After all the tests, the baby was treated for 25 days. Sulochana and Akash were at her side day and night, doing everything they could, along with praying continually for her. During the day, Akash stayed with the baby, and Sulochana stayed overnight.

"On the third day of the treatment the baby opened her eyes and looked at me and smiled," Sulochana recalled. "I went close to her, and in spite of having no strength in her hands, she still hugged me very tight and I told her, 'Jesus loves you.' The baby was almost a skeleton, and when she hugged me I could feel her bones. All her body pus got stuck to my dress. At that moment I felt that the Lord has given this baby to me. I praised God for a new life to the baby."

After the little girl's recovery, Sulochana talked with her husband and also with the father about the child's future. If the parents were unable to care for her, would they be willing for Sulochana and Akash to raise her?

"We had already dug a grave for her in front of our house and had left the baby on the cot to die," the father replied. "She was not eating anything and there was no hope for her. But you came in that time and the Lord has saved the baby through you. If we take the baby back, she would not survive. We have already decided to give the baby to you. You keep her."

Sulochana and Akash were overjoyed with this blessing. Doctors and the medical team instructed them how to take good care of the girl.

Slowly, the child's health improved. She ate and digested well. Very soon, the girl became very healthy, putting on weight. They gave her a new name.*

Over the next four years, she started learning words, and began calling the pastor and his wife "Mom" and "Dad." She attended church with them where she learned about God, and singing small songs.

Sulochana says, "We had two sons (Enosh, 18 and Phillip, 17) and now the Lord had blessed us with a daughter."

Now that baby is four years old. Sulochana and Akash say, "We love the baby very much. We want to see this baby becoming very educated and do great work for the Lord." □

**Name omitted for privacy*



"...There was no hope for her. But you came in that time and the Lord has saved the baby through you."

- Father of the girl



Unloved to loved: Nargiza's story

By Gina Grate Pottenger

"When I was 9 years old, I was playing with kids in the yard, and someone came up to us and invited us to watch the JESUS film. After we watched the movie, they gave us Christian books and I brought them home. My family told me this was wrong and this couldn't be my faith. So I had to throw them away."

Nargiza believes that although her family convinced her to forget what she had seen and learned about Jesus Christ, God remained close to her for the painful years to come.

"When we became older, we noticed that our parents were fighting a lot and finally they got divorced. So we lived with our dad and our grandparents. My brother was older than me, but my sister was only 5 years old. So I had to take care of her as if I was her mom. It was a really, really hard time in my life,

"The difference between my life before Christ and after I accepted Him is that I have hope now."

-- Nargiza

because I felt as if no one loved me and no one cared for me."

When Nargiza was 13, she tried twice to commit suicide by overdosing on strong medicine.

Each time, after swallowing the pills, she laid down expecting to fall asleep and then die. But after just 30 minutes, she woke up and was fine.

"I was miserable. I was thinking to myself, 'Wow, I can't even kill myself properly.'"

When she was a teenager, a classmate invited Nargiza to attend church with her.

"The first time I came there, I felt love and acceptance," Nargiza recalls. "And I wanted to go back there every time. I really enjoyed it."

Nargiza continued going to church where she learned more and more about God and His love for her. In response, at the age of 16 she was ready to give her life to God, and she was baptized. In a culture and a family traditionally following a different religious system, Nargiza's choice was not understood.

"When my family found out that I became Christian, they were very upset and they forbid me to go to church. My father was even more upset with me than others."

Only Nargiza's grandfather supported her decision to follow Jesus.

"He never criticized anyone for their faith, and he told me he was glad I found a true way in my life.

"When I accepted Christ and when I was growing in my faith, He gave me strength to witness to my family and tell them openly I am with Christ and I will never leave Him. When I announced that in my family, I experienced a lot of persecution especially from my dad."

Despite the tension and conflict her faith caused in her family, Nargiza felt secure and confident in God's love for her. That gave her strength to not only continue growing in



her faith, but to show love and compassion to her family, in spite of their rejection.

"The reason why I wanted to commit suicide [earlier] is because I believed no one loved me. But when I came to Christ, I realized how much He loves me. [So] I didn't just go to church, I really committed my life to Jesus," she said.

Later, she studied at and graduated from a Christian seminary. Eventually, Nargiza was ordained in another denomination. Most recently she has been serving in ministry in her Nazarene church.

God used Nargiza's consistent and faithful witness in her family.

"[After] watching my Christian life for 11 years, my Dad accepted Jesus. Through all these years he saw the difference in my life and he said, 'Yes, I believe there is God.'"

"The difference between my life before Christ and after I accepted Him is that I have hope. Through all the difficulties, God is with me and I feel His love in my life." □

Who are Nazarenes?

We are a Christian people

As members of the Church Universal, we join with all true believers in proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ and in affirming the historic Trinitarian creeds and beliefs of the Christian faith. We value our Wesleyan-Holiness heritage and believe it to be a way of understanding the faith that is true to Scripture, reason, tradition, and experience.

We are a holiness people

God, who is holy, calls us to a life of holiness. We believe that the Holy Spirit seeks to do in us a second work of grace, called by various terms including "entire sanctification" and "baptism with the Holy Spirit"-cleansing us from all sin, renewing us in the image of God, empowering us to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves, and producing in us the character of Christ. Holiness in the life of believers is most clearly understood as Christlikeness.

We are a missional people

We are a sent people, responding to the call of Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit to go into all the world, witnessing to the Lordship of Christ and participating with God in the building of the Church and the extension of His kingdom (Matthew 28:19-20; 2 Corinthians 6:1). Our mission (a) begins in worship, (b) ministers to the world in evangelism and compassion, (c) encourages believers toward Christian maturity through discipleship, and (d) prepares women and men for Christian service through Christian higher education.

Learn more at: www.nazarene.org/articles-faith

"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.'"

-- John 11:25

Prayer requests

Please pray for Roy and Cheryl Adair as they patrol a train platform in Scotland, providing prayer, emotional support and God's love to passengers and staff. Ask the Holy Spirit to work through them to reach many people with new life and new hope in Christ, giving the Adairs the right words and discernment for each encounter.

Pray for Akash and Sulochana Singh in their ministry in north India, as well as for their daughter and family. Ask God to anoint them all for greater compassion and effectiveness in serving God and their community.

Pray for Nargiza and her family, as they grow in their faith in Christ, and share that faith with family and community. Ask God to anoint their ministry and to reach many people through them.

Where Worlds Meet

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